



CAIR Claims that the “War on Terrorism” is a “War on Islam”

“The new perception is that the United States has entered a war with Islam itself,” CAIR national board chairman Parvez Ahmed said on July 17, 2007 at a National Press Club Forum.¹ If it’s a new perception, it’s not for a lack of effort by Ahmad’s organization.

Since the 9/11 attacks, CAIR consistently has accused the U.S. government of targeting Islam itself in the war on terrorism. CAIR denies the legitimacy of virtually all U.S. anti-terrorist efforts and claims that almost every prosecution or attack on a terrorist who is Muslim, or any investigation or prosecution of an alleged terrorist front group, is an attack on Islam itself.

CAIR Press Releases/Action Alerts

- After HLF’s assets were frozen in December 2001, CAIR issued a joint statement with a number of other Muslim groups that stated, “We ask that President Bush reconsider what we believe is an unjust and counterproductive move that can only damage America’s credibility with Muslims in this country and around the world and could create the impression that there has been a shift from a war on terrorism to an attack on Islam.”²
- In December 2001, CAIR issued a press release that stated, “American Muslims are now under a cloud of suspicion produced by a drumbeat of anti-Muslim rhetoric from those who are taking advantage of the 9-11 tragedy to carry out their agenda of silencing our community and its leadership once and for all.”³
- Following the Elashi arrests, CAIR-Dallas issued a press release that said, “We are concerned that these charges result from what appears to be a ‘war on Islam and Muslims’ rather than a ‘war on terror.’ Recent actions by the Department of Justice have brought into question the intention of arrests such as these. We, as American Muslims are facing an uphill battle in defending our own government’s foreign policy, as well as the, so-called, war on terrorism, while being targeted by our own law enforcement agencies.”⁴

Nihad Awad, Executive Director of CAIR National⁵

- Responding to a Department of Justice initiative to fingerprint and photograph nearly 100,000 foreigners who were already in the country in an effort to weed out suspected terrorists, Awad said, in June 2002, “What is next? Forcing

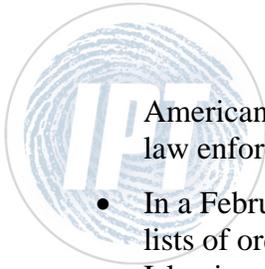
¹ “Bush office is anti-Muslim, group says” Washington Times, July 17, 2007

² “Freeze on Group’s Assets Questioned by US Muslims,” CAIR Press Release, December 4, 2001, <http://web.archive.org/web/20011205052620/http://www.cair-net.org/asp/article.asp?articleid=531&articletype=3> (accessed July 11, 2004).

³ “Contact Attorney General Ashcroft to Demand Due Process of Law,” CAIR Action Alert, December 16, 2001, <http://www.cair-net.org/asp/article.asp?id=78&page=AA> (accessed October 15, 2004).

⁴ “DFW Muslim Leaders Issue Statement Regarding Elashi Family Arrests,” CAIR-Dallas Press Release, December 19, 2002, <http://web.archive.org/web/20030603224447/www.cairdfw.org/cgi-bin/pr/viewnews.cgi?id=1040326553> (accessed July 11, 2004).

⁵ CAIR Board of Directors, <http://www.cair-net.org/default.asp?Page=Board> (accessed October 22, 2004).



- American Muslims to wear a star and crescent as a means of identification for law enforcement authorities?”⁶
- In a February 2003 press release, Awad commented, “That the FBI is seeking lists of ordinary, law-abiding American Muslims only serves to confirm the Islamic community's worst fears of religious and ethnic profiling.”⁷
 - In a February 2003 IslamOnline.net live dialogue, Awad remarked, “Now we see extremists, including the Christian Right and the pro-Israel lobby, carrying out a coordinated campaign against Islam and Muslims. The result of this is clearly apparent from the racist policies and practices being carried out by some branches of the U.S. government influenced by these groups, in contradiction to the assurances President Bush gave us on more than one occasion: that this war is not against Islam.”⁸
 - Referring to the Department of Justice’s desire to question 5,000 Muslim Americans in the wake of September 11, Awad said, in a November 2001 *Chicago Tribune* article, “This type of sweeping investigation carries with it the potential to create the impression that interviewees are being singled out because of their race, ethnicity or religion.”⁹
 - After the FBI announced it would interview Muslims and Arabs during the lead-up to the 2004 elections in an effort to gain information concerning possible terrorist attacks, Awad said, “The way it’s being done stigmatizes the entire community and makes Muslims objects of suspicion to their neighbors and co-workers.... This is more politics than security... Muslims should be enlisted in the war on terror, not blacklisted.”¹⁰
 - In a November 2001 *Connecticut Post* report, Awad was quoted as saying, “The question [of a cease-fire] is a political one. If this war goes on and the U.S. continues to bomb Afghanistan, it will lose... [credibility] in the Muslim world in terms of support. It will be seen by Muslims as a war against Muslims. It's a phenomenon right now in the minds of some Muslims.”¹¹
 - Commenting on a Justice Department plan requiring Muslim and Middle Eastern visa holders to register with the government and be fingerprinted, Awad said, in a June 5, 2002 CAIR press release, “Policies that single out particular religious

⁶ Eric Lichtblau, “Strict New Visa Rules Outlined Amid Protests,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 2002.

⁷ “FBI Request for Mosque List Condemned by CAIR,” *PR Newswire*, February 20, 2003.

⁸ Nihad Awad Live Dialogue, “Islam in America: National Ad Campaign,” February 23, 2003, <http://islamonline.net/livedialogue/english/Browse.asp?hGuestID=Z7oSDW> (accessed October 30, 2003).

⁹ Naftali Bendavid, “Bush OKs Terror Tribunals; US Seeks 5,000 Foreign Nationals for Questioning in Investigations,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 14, 2001.

¹⁰ Richard B. Schmitt and Donna Horowitz, “FBI Starts to Question Muslims in U.S. About Possible Attacks,” *The Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 2004.

¹¹ Marian Gail Brown, “‘We Pray for Peace’ Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan Begins,” *Connecticut Post*, November 16, 2001.



and ethnic groups create a false sense of security and end up further damaging America's image and reputation around the world.”¹² He added:

Recent policies targeting Muslims and Arabs, including the interviewing of 8,000 legal visa holders, the detention without due process of some 1,200 individuals, the targeting of Muslim and Arab ‘absconders,’ the use of secret evidence, the raids on Muslim homes and institutions, and the new FBI guidelines allowing surveillance of mosques engaged in legal activities, all failed to result in a single terrorism-related arrest. Law-abiding residents in this country should not be made the scapegoats for past intelligence failures.¹³

- The following is an excerpt from a March 2002 IslamOnline.net article that refers to the SAAR raids: “Nihad Awad, executive director of Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), who was in Saudi Arabia at the time of the raids, described how he had to defend his government to the Saudis he was meeting with, whose first reaction to the news of the raids was, ‘This is a war against Islam and Muslims.’ ‘Our administration has the burden of proving otherwise,’ he said.”¹⁴
- During a September 2001 *CNN* interview, Awad said, “To see myself and my fellow Muslims and Arabs being stopped in airports because of our look, because of our feature, because of our names, because of the way that we dress I think speaks volumes.”¹⁵
- On January 7, 2006, Awad and other Muslim leaders flew to Tampa to attend a rally in support of Sami Al-Arian. The *Orlando Sentinel* reported:

Nihad Awad said Al-Arian was the victim of a politically charged environment three years ago that resulted in the persecution of Muslims. “Is this about what we did or what we are?” said Awad, executive director of the Council on American Islamic Relations civil rights group in Washington. “Most of these cases are done for political reasons. . . . I think the government is abusing the system.”¹⁶

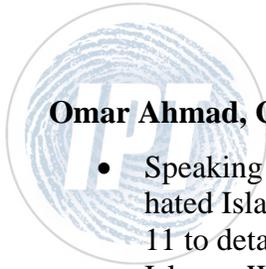
¹² “Fingerprinting Proposal is Discriminatory Say Muslims,” CAIR Press Release, June 5, 2002, <http://www.cair-net.org/asp/article.asp?id=836&page=NR> (accessed July 16, 2004).

¹³ “Fingerprinting Proposal is Discriminatory Say Muslims,” CAIR Press Release, June 5, 2002, <http://www.cair-net.org/asp/article.asp?id=836&page=NR> (accessed July 16, 2004).

¹⁴ Ayesha Ahmad, “Muslim Community Members Encourage Coalition Building,” March 26, 2002, <http://www.islam-online.net/English/News/2002-04/10/article08.shtml> (accessed July 11, 2004).

¹⁵ “The Unfortunate Backlash in Terrorism’s Wake,” *CNN*, September 22, 2001, <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0109/22/smn.15.html> (accessed October 31, 2003).

¹⁶ Pedro Ruz Gutierrez, “Al-Arian may avoid new terror trial,” *Orlando Sentinel*, January 7, 2006, http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/state/orl-alarian0706jan07_0_547457.story?coll=orl-news-headlines-state (accessed January 10, 2006).



Omar Ahmad, Chairman Emeritus of CAIR National¹⁷

- Speaking at a CAIR fundraiser in October 2002, Ahmad said, “These people hated Islam...before September 11. They are using the opportunity of September 11 to detain Islam Muslims or find the problem and attack the foundations of Islam...We are under attack.”¹⁸
- At a December 2003 CAIR fundraiser, Ahmad said, “We should not be blinded by the few who hated Islam and Muslims before September 11. They’re exploiting September 11 for their own political reasons.”¹⁹
- At the same December 2003 event, he said, “Many of our civil liberties have been taken away since September 11 in the name of fighting terrorism. The process of marginalizing our community, pushing us to the margins...is ongoing. A lot of media outlets, especially the right-wing outlets, are having a field day attacking Islam, attacking Muslims...”²⁰

Parvez Ahmed, Chairman of the Board of CAIR National²¹

- In July 2007, in an op-ed for the *Dallas Morning News*, Ahmed wrote, “As a nation, we can ill afford the perception that we are at war with a faith practiced by more than a billion people accounting for more than a fifth of humanity today,”²² and argued that “Islamophobia” was on the rise in America.

Ibrahim Hooper, Spokesman for CAIR National²³

- Hooper is quoted in a December 2001 *Denver Post* report as saying, “There has been a demonization of Islam.”²⁴
- In a May 2004 *New York Times* article, Hooper commented, “I’d be surprised if there’s a mosque in the country that hasn’t come under scrutiny these days. It becomes the whole Kevin Bacon game – no Muslim is more than six degrees away from terrorism.”²⁵
- In a July 2003 *Chicago Tribune* article, Hooper said that the Department of Justice has a “general policy of targeting Muslims because they are Muslims.”²⁶

¹⁷ CAIR Board of Directors, <http://www.cair-net.org/default.asp?Page=Board> (accessed October 22, 2004).

¹⁸ CAIR Fundraiser, Virginia, October 26, 2002.

¹⁹ CAIR-Sacramento Valley Area First Annual Fundraising Banquet, Sacramento, California, December 14, 2003.

²⁰ CAIR-Sacramento Valley Area First Annual Fundraising Banquet, Sacramento, California, December 14, 2003.

²¹ “Parvez Ahmed: U.S. can ill afford the perception that we are at war with Islam,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 2007.

²² Ibid

²³ John Hendren, “President Decries General’s Remarks,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 2003.

²⁴ Diane Carman, Crisis of Faiths Imperils Peace,” *Denver Post*, December 20, 2001.

²⁵ Sarah Kershaw and Eric Lichtblau, “Spain had Doubts Before US Held Lawyer in Madrid Blasts,” *The New York Times*, May 26, 2004.

²⁶ Dan Mihalopoulos, “Abuse of Post-9/11 Detainees Detailed,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 2003.



- After FBI Director Robert Mueller announced “a heightened threat to U.S. interests around the world” in May 2004 and asked the nation to be on the lookout for seven Muslim terrorism suspects,²⁷ Hooper said, “It’s part of the ‘round up the usual suspects’ mentality. When you don’t have any other leads, you gather up the Muslims.”²⁸
- After President Bush released a most-wanted terrorist list that included only Middle Easterners, Hooper responded, “This creates a very troubling perception. This list perpetuates the stereotype that while all Muslims may not be terrorists, all terrorists are Muslims.”²⁹
- Asked about the Justice Department plan to fingerprint and photograph visitors from designated Muslim and Arab countries, Hooper told *The Chicago Tribune* in June 2002 that the initiative “sends a message that Muslims and Arabs are guilty until they are proven innocent, that there is some reason to suspect Muslims and Arab people before anyone else.”³⁰
- When the FBI’s plan to count the number of mosques in the U.S. was made public in February 2003, Hooper told *Newsweek*, “It’s frightening to hear that this is actual policy. This just shows how they are viewing every Islamic community in the country with suspicion.”³¹
- Hooper was interviewed for a September 29, 2003 *CNSNews.com* story on the hearings that Senators Charles Schumer and Jon Kyl held in June³² and September, 2003³³ on Wahhabi influence in America. Hooper commented, “elected representatives like Senator Schumer and Senator Kyl...are jumping on this issue in order to demonize all Muslim groups and all Muslims in America.”³⁴

Arsalan Iftikhar, CAIR Legal Director³⁵

- Iftikhar wrote in *The Kansas City Star* in March 2002, “It is high time that the United States proves to the 7 million Muslim-Americans that indeed, this is not a war on Islam.”³⁶

Riad Abdelkarim, Former Communications Director for CAIR-Western Region³⁷

²⁷ Remarks Prepared for Director Robert S. Mueller, III, BOLO News Conference, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, DC, May 26, 2004.

²⁸ Shannon McCaffrey, “US Renews Manhunt for Al Qaeda Suspects,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 2004.

²⁹ Eric Lichtblau, and Josh Meyer, “US Unveils ‘Most Wanted’ Terrorist List,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 2001.

³⁰ Mike Dorning, “Critics Attack US Plan for Visa Scrutiny,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 6, 2002.

³¹ Michael Isikoff, “The FBI Says, Count the Mosques,” *Newsweek*, February 23, 2003.

³² <http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearing.cfm?id=827> (accessed March 9, 2004).

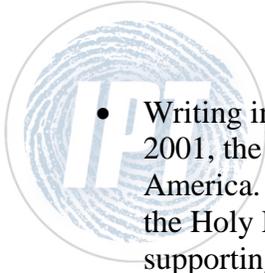
³³ <http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearing.cfm?id=910> (accessed March 9, 2004).

³⁴ Jeff Johnson, “Investigation of ‘Terrorist Recruitment’ Concerns Muslims,” *CNSNews.com*, September 29, 2003.

³⁵ “American Muslims Sue DHS Over Border Detentions CAIR,” CAIR Website, April 21, 2005, <http://www.cair-net.org/default.asp?Page=articleView&id=1549&theType=NR> (accessed July 10, 2006).

³⁶ Arsalan Iftikhar, “Am I Next?,” *Kansas City Star*, March 5, 2002.

³⁷ “Calif. Doctor Thanks Supporters for Release from Israel,” *U.S. Newswire*, May 20, 2002.



- Writing in *Q-News* in 2002, Abdelkarim remarked, “On Tuesday 4 December 2001, the U.S. government effectively declared war on Islam and Muslims in America. President George Bush accused the country's largest Muslim charity - the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development - of funding Hamas and supporting terrorism. This witch-hunt of Muslim organizations (sic) is not a precautionary measure in the war against terrorism - it is a nationwide smear campaign to undermine Muslims and the institutions that serve them.”³⁸
- Abdelkarim co-authored a May 2002 *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* article which stated, “One thing, however, is certain: if American Muslims allow their charities and institutions to be destroyed without defending them with their words, actions, and funds, those organizations already targeted will not be the only American Muslim institutions eliminated in this war against American Muslims.”³⁹

Ahmad Al-Akhras, President of CAIR-Ohio⁴⁰

- Quoted in a September 2003 *United Press International* article, Al-Akhras said, “Things that we took for granted as Muslims are not forgotten anymore, because unfortunately Islam is viewed in negative light. (We) are subject to more profiling and discrimination and that kind of thing. In the past it was under the surface sometimes. Today unfortunately, it has become institutionalized by government sponsored agencies whether the Department of Justice does the profiling through the Patriot Act.”⁴¹

Ahmed Bedier, CAIR-Florida Communications Director⁴²

- In a June 2004 *Associated Press* article, Bedier said, “From our position, prominent Muslim individuals are being targeted selectively by the government. The allegations are overstated and Muslims are facing a double standard.”⁴³

Helal Omeira, Executive Director of CAIR-San Francisco Bay⁴⁴

- In a September 2003 *SFGate.com* report, Omeira said, “[Immigration] issues have upset the community tremendously and show that this is a target on our

³⁸ Riad Abdelkarim, “American Muslim Charities: A Sacrificial Lamb for Israel,” *Q-News*, January-February, 2002. <http://web.archive.org/web/20030605035653/q-news.com/339-340.htm>

³⁹ Riad Abdelkarim and Basil Abdelkarim, “Islam in America: As American Muslims Face New Raids, Muslim Charities Fight Back,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, May 2002.

⁴⁰ Hil Anderson, “Sept 11: Memories Lurk Close to Surface,” *United Press International*, September 4, 2003.

⁴¹ Hil Anderson, “Sept 11: Memories Lurk Close to Surface,” *United Press International*, September 4, 2003.

⁴² Waveney Ann Moore, “Devoutly Muslim-and American,” *St. Petersburg Times*, October 16, 2004.

⁴³ Mike Schneider, “Businessman: I am being Prosecuted for Supporting Palestinians,” *Associated Press*, June 9, 2004.

⁴⁴ “CAIR SFBA Receives NAACP Award,” CAIR California Website, May 1, 2004, http://www.cair-california.org/?cls=News&sbcls=Archived_News&id=23 (accessed July 10, 2006).



community and that this whole war on terrorism, at least domestically, does not apply to everybody equally.”⁴⁵

- Based on intelligence of an Al Qaeda strike to be carried out before the 2004 elections, the FBI announced it would interview U.S. Muslims and Arabs to find terror operatives before they could act.⁴⁶ Omeira is quoted in a July 2004 *Associated Press* article as saying, “When will the suspicion end? We’ve been so open, and three years later everyone is still a suspect...It’s a loss of credibility for the Department of Justice to focus on the Muslim community when there are so many other things going on out there.”⁴⁷
- Responding to the INS registration program for male visitors from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Syria, Omeira said, “You can’t just detain people and keep it a secret and all these Gestapo tactics. This is not my America. My America wouldn’t treat people like this.”⁴⁸
- Omeira responded to the government shutdown of HLF by declaring, “There are some opportunistic elements in the international scene, primarily Israel, that see... [9/11] as an opportunity to further put their stranglehold on the Palestinians by removing the most prominent and respectable relief organization in the region.”⁴⁹

Deedra Aboud, Executive Director of CAIR-Arizona

- Referring to FBI interviews of Muslims, Aboud said, in July 2004, “It’s just little things like this that gives us the perception that somehow Muslims are second-class citizens.”⁵⁰

Hussam Ayloush, Executive Director of CAIR-Southern California

- In May 2004, Ayloush said that the war on terror had become a “war on Muslims,” the *Associated Press* reported.⁵¹ Ayloush added that the United States had become the “new Saddam” and should “end this hypocrisy, this hypocrisy that we are better than the other dictator.”⁵²
- At an Oct. 4, 2003 CAIR fundraiser in Anaheim, California, Ayloush stated:

Those hate-mongers want to tell us that it is OK to target someone because of his race, his color or the religion he or she follows. These people attacked our religion, attacked our holy book the Koran, attacked our prophets, all of our

⁴⁵ “Tenderloin Mosque Finds its Place,” SFGate.com, September 11, 2003, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/09/11/BA298905.DTL> (accessed October 31, 2003).

⁴⁶ Larry Margasak, “FBI will Expand Interviews in Arab/Muslim Communities” *Arab American News*, July 16, 2004.

⁴⁷ Larry Margasak, “FBI will Expand Interviews in Arab/Muslim Communities” *Arab American News*, July 16, 2004.

⁴⁸ Michele Marcucci, “Protests fail to stop new INS detentions,” *The Oakland Tribune*, January 11, 2003.

⁴⁹ Jodi Enda and Ken Moritsugo, “Muslims in Bay Area Protest Move to Freeze Charity’s Assets,” *San Jose Mercury News*, December 5, 2001.

⁵⁰ Gary Nelson, “Questions on how Free We are Linger for Some,” *East Valley Tribune*, July 5, 2004.

⁵¹ Ben Fox, “American Muslims Shamed by Prison Photos,” *Associated Press*, May 8, 2004.

⁵² Ben Fox, “American Muslims Shamed by Prison Photos,” *Associated Press*, May 8, 2004.



prophets, attacked our leaders, religious and political leaders, our organizations and every day average Muslims. And those attacks, believe me, have not stopped.⁵³

- In December 2001, Ayloush said, “As we see one charitable organization after the other having its assets frozen and its offices closed, you know, the shift from fighting terrorism is slowly happening towards a fight against symbols of Islam or Islamic activism in the U.S.”⁵⁴

Christina Abraham, CAIR-Chicago Civil Rights Coordinator

- Abraham wrote an op-ed on CAIR-Chicago’s website entitled, “The Malicious Prosecution of Muslims,” in which she writes, “Muslims in America worry every day about being singled out because of their religion. They fear that their religious ties will make them targets of law enforcement, employers, colleagues, or hate-filled criminals. For many Muslims, this fear has been actualized. One phenomenon recently observed by CAIR-Chicago is the malicious prosecution of Muslims. It begins when federal law enforcement investigates a Muslim for purported ties to terrorism. Then, when nothing can be found against them, other unrelated charges are brought. Many times, the charges are tenuous. Often, the charges are eventually dropped or the individuals are cleared through a trial, but not without an emotional and financial toll.”⁵⁵

⁵³ CAIR Fundraiser, Anaheim, California, October 4, 2003.

⁵⁴ “Marketplace Morning Report,” *Minnesota Public Radio*, December 26, 2001.

⁵⁵ Christina Abraham, “The Malicious Prosecution of Muslims,” CAIR-Chicago, January 23, 2007.